are 10725 villages in Chota Nagpur of Bihar. Out of which only 1767 have post offices. The post offices are opened keeping in view the justification for the same as per the departmental norms as also with reference to target fixed for opening of post offices. In view of this it is not possible to open post offices in each village. During the current year 1991-92 a target for opening 50 extra departmental branch post offices has been fixed for Chota Nagpur. It is, however, proposed to provide phone facility in every panchayat village.

Criteria for Awarding Contracts of Telephone Line in Remote Areas

1643. SHRI SUDHIR SAWANT: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria adopted for awarding contracts for laying telephone line in remote areas;

(b) whether response to tenders for laying telephone cables in remote areas is poor, if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government propose to award contracts to Labour Cooperative Societies on priority basis, if so, the modus operandi therefor;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether due to want of contractors the laying of liens, the work in Rajapur, Sandhudurg and Ratnagiri districts has been affected; and

(f) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) Contractors for laying telephone lines are awarded through an open tender.

(b) Some time in remote areas affected by terrorism there are difficulties in getting suitable contractors and the response to tenders is some times poor.

(c) It is not proposed to allot any special priority to Labour Co-operative Societies. The Labour Co-operative Societies should also participate in the open tender and give their offer.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) and (f). The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

Applications for Telephone Connections in Ernakulam District of Kerala

1644. PROF. K.V. THOMAS: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of telephone applications pending in Ernakulam District, Kerala; and

(b) the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) There are 30396 applications waiting for telephone connections in Ernakulam revenue district as on 30.9.91.

(b) As per draft 8th Plan proposals expansion programme are being drawn with an objective:

to provide telephone practically on demand in rural and tribal areas;

waiting period for telephone con-

nections not to exceed two years at other places.

Accordingly, the waiting list persons will be provided telephone connections progressively during the 8th Plan.

[*Translation*]

Electronic Exchanges in Indore

1645. SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of electronic exchanges functioning in Indore at present and the number of those under construction and the time by which these exchanges are likely to be completed;

(b) whether any scheme is under consideration to set up more electronic exchanges in future; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) 5 Nos. of Electronic Exchanges are working. Work for expanding the existing exchanges by 7500 lines is in progress and is likely to be completed by March 1992.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) In the near future, one 10,000 lines Electronic Exchange is planned at Nehru Park during 1992-93.

Super Power Thermal Station in Bihar

1646. SHRI CHHEDI PASWAN: Will the Minister of POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to set up a Super Power Thermal Station in Bihar;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). A proposal has been received from National Thermal Power Corporation for setting up of the North Karanpura Super Thermal Power Project Stage-I (2X500 MW) in district Hazaribagh. The proposal has been techno-economically cleared by the Central Electricity Authority subject to certain conditions including clearance from environmental angle, confirmation of water availability etc. The project will require investment approval after these issues are settled.

[*English*]

SC/ST Quota for Various Posts

1647. SHRI C.P. MUDALA GIRIYAPPA:
SHRI H.K. MUNIYAAP:

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to reserve some posts of High Court Judges, Supreme Court Judges, Member of Legislative Councils, Members of Rajya Sabha, Ambassadors for the members of SCs/STs and for women;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?